



Small Grains XII

Wheat Strawworm

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Identification (and life cycle/seasonal history)

The wheat strawworm, *Tetramesa grandis* (Riley), is found in most North American wheat production areas. Once considered one of the major wheat pests, on a par with Hessian fly, it is now thought to be of only minor importance. The wheat strawworm overwinters in the pupal stage within a feeding cell in the wheat stem, usually located near a node. In the spring the small, black wingless spring adults emerge and lay the small, white, bulb-like eggs near the growing point of a tiller. The robust, pale yellow larvae hatch and destroy the growing point and form a feeding cell at the base of the tiller. Pupation occurs within the cell and within two weeks the larger, winged summer adults (females only) emerge. The summer adults lay their eggs near one of the upper joints where the larvae feed and mature within the stem. Summer form larvae are longer and more slender than those formed in the spring generation. A cell is formed near one of the joints where the larvae pass the summer and fall until pupation.



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Plant response and damage

Spring generation larvae feed on and destroy the developing spike. Summer generation larvae feed within the stem, just above one of the nodes, reducing yield and quality to an undetermined degree.

Management approaches

Biological Control

No applied biological controls exist for the control of wheat strawworm.

Cultural Control

Recommended cultural controls include late fall or early spring stubble destruction and growing the current year's crop at some distance from the previous year's crop, and control of volunteer wheat plants. The use of

early maturing varieties allows escape from the summer generation.

Chemical Control

No effective insecticide treatments are known for the wheat strawworm.

Categories: Small grains, Insects, Wheat Strawworm

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